

Emergency Support Function #9 - Urban Search and Rescue

Primary Agency

Fire-EMS Department

Secondary/Support Agencies

Emergency Management
Police Department
Sheriff's Department
Civil Air Patrol
Volunteer Search and Rescue Groups
Virginia Department of Emergency Management

I. Introduction

A. Purpose:

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #9 – Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) provides for the coordination and effective use of available resources for urban search and rescue activities to assist people in potential or actual distress in wilderness, urban, disaster, and flood/Swiftwater environs.

B. Scope:

The City of Roanoke is susceptible to many different natural and technical hazards that may result in significant damage to isolated or vast areas. Search and Rescue resources must be prepared to respond to emergency events and provide special life saving assistance for the gamut of potential threats. Their operational activities include: locating, extricating, and providing on site medical treatment to victims trapped in collapsed structures; locating and stabilizing missing, disoriented, traumatized, or injured persons in wilderness, urban, or flood/Swiftwater incidents. The responsible search and rescue agencies must be prepared to respond to these incidents and implement search and rescue tactics to assist those who are, or believed to be, in distress or imminent danger. These search operations can occur anywhere within the 46 square miles of the City of Roanoke from “open field” situations, such as parks, neighborhoods, to Mill Mountain Park.

C. Policies:

1. The EOP provides the guidance for managing the acquisition of Search and Rescue resources;
2. All requests for Search and Rescue will be submitted to the EOC for coordination, validation, and/or action in accordance with this ESF;
3. Communications will be established and maintained with ESF #5 – Emergency Management to report and receive assessments and status information;
4. Will coordinate with State and Federal agencies as necessary;
5. Personnel will stay up to date with procedures through training and education;
6. Search and rescue task forces are considered Federal assets under the Robert T. Stafford Act only when requested for a search and rescue for a collapsed structure.

II. Concept of Operations

A. General:

The Fire-EMS department will be responsible for rescue and search operations during a disaster with assistance from the Police Department and volunteer assets (if applicable). The National Response Plan identifies ESF #9 as Urban Search and Rescue; but for the purpose of function within the City of Roanoke, ESF #9 will include all search and rescue operations to include wilderness, downed aircraft, Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), and criminal searches. The Police Department has authority and serves as Primary department for non-disaster searches as they are all potential criminal acts.

B. Organization:

The Police Department has the primary responsibility of providing incident management with SAR operations involving criminal incidents. If a criminal incident does not exist, the Fire-EMS Department will be the primary agency including urban search and rescue operations. The Police Department, Public Works and environmental management may assist when required for structural evaluation and safety of buildings and structures (ESF #3). The local chapter of the American Red Cross may assist with support efforts during searches such as mass care feeding; sheltering; bulk distribution; logistics; and health and mental health services for rescue workers, support personnel, and the victims. The Health Department will advise search and rescue medical teams on industrial hygiene issues as they become apparent. Public Works and Engineering Services will assist with any equipment, maps, staff, and vehicles. In a secondary role, the Police Department will assist with perimeter security, communications, and assistance as required. The Fire-EMS Department will provide medical resources, equipment and expertise. Communications will be established and maintained with ESF #5 – Emergency Management to report and receive assessments and status information. SAR resources include:

- a. Police Department;
- b. Fire-EMS Department;
- c. Sheriff's Department;
- d. Salem Fire & EMS Department;
- e. Roanoke County Fire & EMS Department;
- f. Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference; (Contact VEOC)
- g. Canine SAR Team, which provides the following capabilities: (Contact VEOC)
 1. Area Search-Air Scent
 2. Tracking/Trailing
 3. Evidence Search
 4. Cadaver Search
 5. Water Search
 6. Urban Search
 7. Disaster/Collapse Structural
 8. Fire Scene
 9. Arson-Accelerant Search
 10. Evidence-Article Search
- h. Cave Rescue Unit; (Contact State EOC)
- i. Dive Rescue Unit; (Contact State EOC)
- j. Equine SAR Team; (Contact State EOC)
- k. Swiftwater Rescue Team; Fire-EMS Swiftwater Rescue Team.
- l. Mountain Rescue Team; (Contact State EOC)
- m. Air Search Team; Virginia Civil Air Patrol. (Contact State EOC)

C. Actions

1. Develop and maintain plans and procedures to implement search and rescue operations in time of emergency;
2. Provide emergency medical treatment and pre-hospital care to the injured;
3. Assist with the warning, evacuation and relocation of citizens during a disaster;
4. The designated representatives should report to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). When necessary assign duties to all personnel;
5. Implement and utilize NIMS;
6. Follow established procedures in responding to USAR incidents; and
7. Record disaster related expenses.

D. Responsibilities

1. Primary Departments

a. Fire-EMS

1. Fire-EMS will serve as primary department in any urban search and rescue (disaster) operation;
2. Manages search and rescue deployment to, employment in, and redeployment from the affected area;
3. Coordinates logistical support for search and rescue during field operations;
4. Develops policies and procedures for effective use and coordination of search and rescue;
5. Provide medical resources, equipment and expertise.
6. Provide status reports on search and rescue operations throughout the affected area; and
7. Request further assistance from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for additional resources.
8. Develop and maintain standard operating procedures

b. Police Department

1. Responsible for coordinating non-disaster search and rescue operations;
2. Develop and maintain alerting and communication procedures that will ensure timely notification;
3. Maintain minimum training and roster of personnel;
4. Coordinate all investigations for missing persons;
5. Coordinate initiation of AMBER Alert System;

Support Departments

a. ESF # 13 (Public Safety & Security)

1. Assist with perimeter security, communications, and assistance as required
2. Develop and maintain standard operating procedures

b. Emergency Management

1. Coordinate resource requests through State EOC;
2. Collect and disseminate situation status reports;
2. Serve as technical specialist as needed; and
3. Provide administrative and logistical support.

c. Public Works

1. Assist with any equipment, maps, staff, and vehicles;
2. Assist with structural evaluation and safety of buildings and structures;
3. Provide heavy equipment support for SAR operations; and
4. Coordinate electricity termination to collapsed structures.

d. Health Department

1. Advise search and rescue teams on industrial hygiene issues as needed.

e. ESF #2 (Communications)

1. Collect and disseminate information pertaining to search and rescue operations;
2. Prepare press releases on situation status as needed; and
3. Provide information to City Council as requested.

f. American Red Cross

1. Assist with support efforts during searches such as mass care feeding; sheltering; bulk distribution; logistics; and health and mental health services for rescue workers, support personnel, and the victims.

Tab 7 to ESF #9
Virginia Department of Emergency Management Search and Rescue Resource
Guide

State EOC ALERTING/RESOURCE REQUEST PROCEDURES

A search and rescue emergency may involve any missing person, regardless of the reason. They may be in a vehicle, a boat, an aircraft, or on foot. Assistance is available whenever a SAR emergency arises in your jurisdiction. A SAR Duty Officer is on call 24-hours a day to discuss problems, recommend appropriate responses, and activate resources.

Resource Checklist

Search Management (overhead team)
Trained field teams and field team leaders
Air-scent search dogs and trailing dogs
Mantracking
Helicopter (Light Hoist FLIR DF MEDEVAC)
Fixed-Wing Aircraft (Light DF)
Electronic search (ELT EPIRB PLB)
Cliff and cave rescue
Remote-area medical care and evacuation
Water search
Body and evidence search

FOR 24-HOUR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND RESPONSE
CALL THE VIRGINIA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

800-468-8892
(Virginia Only)

or

804-674-2400

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST TRAINING
CALL THE SEARCH AND RESCUE OFFICE

804-674-2422

Tab 8 to ESF #9
Virginia Emergency Management Resource Guide Glossary

GLOSSARY

The definitions listed here are for the purpose of this document only. They may or may not reflect the definitions used by other individuals, groups or agencies.

Air Scent Dog - A search dog that will detect airborne human scent.

Coordinator of Emergency Management - The person appointed by the Governor, pursuant to Title 44, Code of Virginia, as the agency head of the Department of Emergency Management, with the responsibility to coordinate and administer emergency services operations in the Commonwealth.

Dog Team - 1 handler and 1 dog.

Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) - a low-power transmitting device carried on light aircraft as required by federal law, and on most military aircraft. It is impact activated and transmits a distinctive sweeping tone that can be detected by aircraft mounted or hand-held direction finding (DF) equipment.

Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) - The marine version of the ELT. It will float and is manually activated or activated when submerged in the water.

Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) - A thermal imaging device designed to be aircraft mounted, usually on a helicopter, that can detect heat sources at night. Useful in locating persons on foot, concealed vehicles, aircraft wreckage, and other sources.

Handler - The person who controls and directs a dog during a search. This person does not have to be the owner or trainer of the dog.

Last Known Position (LKP) - The last known location for the missing subject as determined by physical evidence such as a discarded object or a footprint. In the case of an aircraft the LKP may be the last reported point or the last observed radar position.

Legal Responsible Agent (RA) - The official and/or agency having legal responsibility for the emergency response to a SAR incident. In ICS this person is known as the "Agency Administrator"

Local SAR Coordinator - The person responsible for coordination of SAR operations within a given jurisdiction.

Overhead Team - A highly trained, quick response SAR management team that can respond to assist with search planning, coordination, and operations. The overhead team usually consists of a manager and one or two assistant.

Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) - The personal version of the ELT designed to be carried by a person on foot. It is manually activated.

Point Last Seen (PLS) - The location where the missing subject was actually seen by another person.

Rural - County often given to farming or to woodland and sparsely to moderately populated.

SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) - The person designated by the Legal Responsible Agent to coordinate and manage on-scene operations during a specific SAR incident. Depending upon the management system used and the organizations involved, this person may be called the Mission Coordinator (MC), On-Scene Commander (OSC), or Incident Commander (IC).

SAR Emergency - Any SAR incident, whether related to any other type of incident or not, that requires the utilization of resources to resolve, due to the threat or potential threat to human life.

State Coordinating Officer - The person designated by the Coordinator of Emergency Management to be the agent of the Coordinator during a specific SAR incident.

State SAR Coordinator - The person designated by the Coordinator of Emergency Management to coordinate the Search and Rescue program of the Department of Emergency Management and to coordinate overall state SAR operations.

Tracker - An individual who can detect and follow signs of human passage.

Tracking Dog - A search dog that will follow the ground scent of a person who has passed through an area in which the dog is searching.

Trailing Dog - A search dog that will follow the scent trail of a specific individual, after the dog has been allowed to smell an article of object that has been in contact with that individual. the trailing dog is scent discriminating.

Urban Interface - Moderately to heavily populated areas given primarily to business and residential development.

Wilderness - An area generally uncultivated and uninhabited and often inaccessible by road.